

A New Generation Of Growth Regulators

by Dr. Douglas T. Hawes

Have you been listening to or reading recent reports on the MH 30 (maleic hydrazide) replacements? I may just be showing my age with that remark. Embark (mefluidide) and Cutlass (flurprimidol), the latest "growth retardants," are truly plant growth regulators (PGR's).

Embark has been out a little longer than Cutlass, and there are some other PGR's available also. Embark is the one I'm most familiar with. Research with it at very low rates looks very exciting, and the cost is so low it is hard to believe. It's time you started to re-read the articles on these products.

Four to eight ounces per acre on *Poa annua*-contaminated fairways at *Poa* greenup in the spring either kills the *Poa* or stops most all seedhead production. Imagine fairways that didn't turn white in late May! You don't like the word "kills"? In that case, make sure you put on no more than eight ounces per acre. One more reported "benefit": better summer survival of *Poa annua* in the fairways.

These rates have been used less successfully on greens. There have been some severe losses, so be careful and make sure you get the rate correct. Best to stick to four ounces per acre if you have guts enough to do your greens. I'm still a little apprehensive about this use.

Of even more interest is applying similar rates in November. These applications have resulted in significant increases in the other cool season grasses in the stand with a very significant decrease in the amount of *Poa*. When sprayed in November, *Poa annua* appears to very, very slowly fade away.

(Doug also reports that he checked with Tee-2-Green Corp., using their 1-800-547-2055 number, about the rumor that Penncross would be unavailable. They give him a very firm denial, saying there was no chance that Penncross would be taken off the market in the next few years or even the more distant future. He suggests holding them to their word, in the absence of any good replacement.)

MAAGCS MERCHANDISE

A variety of golf shirts, sweaters, and golf jackets bearing the Mid-Atlantic logo are available. Contact Steve Nash for details.

THE SEARCH FOR BETTER GRASSES

by Patrick M. O'Brien, Agronomist
USGA Green Section, Mid-Atlantic Region

Every golf course Superintendent dreams of a grass which would better please his golfers and would cost less to maintain. In the past there has never been a national effort by plant breeders backed with millions of dollars necessary to develop the ultimate golf course grasses. Today, this most important research is now a reality.

In March, 1982, the USGA Turfgrass Research Committee was formed to guide the USGA's long-range multi-million dollar turfgrass research plans for the coming decade. The purpose is the develop minimal maintenance turfgrasses for golf with particular emphasis on a 50 percent reduction in water use requirements and 50 percent lower maintenance overall. In 1983 the USGA invited the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) to join the research committee. The GCSAA is now an active and valued participant on the Research Committee.



The program is now almost four years old. From 1983 to 1985, over \$827,000 was spent on the project. In 1986, approximately \$440,000 is currently allocated to almost \$1.3 million dollars. Truly, the serious search for better grasses has begun.

The research program is divided into five main areas:

- 1) Stress Mechanisms
- 2) Turfgrass Research Library
- 3) Turfgrass Breeding-One
- 4) Turfgrass Breeding-Two
- 5) Cultural Practices

The first major priority was to develop a Research Reference Library. This is well on-track with over 6,000 entries now in the computer, and it is open for business to all in the turfgrass industry. The Library is at Michigan State University under the direction of Peter Cookingham.

Overall, the USGA/GCSAA Research Committee is very satisfied with the progress to date. There is agreement that the breeding and stress mechanism phase is going very well. We must constantly remind ourselves that new, improved turfgrass cultivators take a long time to develop — usually from 8 to 20 years — and we must not grow impatient.

In future up-dates I will cover how your club can participate, how to collect grasses at your club for the program, identify the researchers, more on the turfgrass library, news notes from specific projects, and how your suggestions and guidance as working superintendents are desired.

The development of improved minimal maintenance turfgrasses is a worthy goal for everyone — not just for golf, but for all who labor and are concerned with conservation and the environment. It is important for all who enjoy the beauty and recreation of the outdoors and what it has to offer our modern world. The first four years of progress indicate that we are well on our way toward that goal.

NEW MEMBERS

Vincent C. Hankley, Class A
Superintendent
TPC at Avenel

David L. Anderson, Class D
Assistant Superintendent
TPC at Avenel

Wallace Whetsell, Class D
Assistant Superintendent
Woodholme Country Club

Brian L. Dunn, Class D
Assistant Superintendent
International Country Club

HANDICAPS NEEDED

MAAGCS members who plan to play in association tournaments this year should arrange for a USGA handicap card. The pro at your club will probably be glad to put you into the club's handicap program, and entering 10 scores will produce a valid handicap. Eventually, 20 scores should be accumulated, and the low 10 will be used to figure your handicap. Using "estimated" or outdated handicaps is not fair to your fellow competitors.